

Our County
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County Mayor

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The weather is changing and to me, the cooler temperatures are a welcome benefit of living in southeast Tennessee. The upcoming change in time of “falling back” one hour at the end of Daylight Savings Time on November 1st, 2020 is another story altogether, though!

The changes that abound in also getting ready for the Christmas holiday season is another welcome benefit to our retail establishments all across our community. With the State required restrictions to help safeguard our citizens since early in March of this year many of our local businesses have been financially restricted, to say the least. But with the lessening of these same restrictions, we will inevitably see the advent of many of the tried and true, as well as a few new, methods of numerous criminals to try and separate the “hard-earned” cash from those who have worked to legally earn their money.

Data is needed for business, government, and personal communications to occur. This is especially true with any type of electronic communication. The ability to receive instant information from a request has become so commonplace that it reminds me of those who now tap their hands waiting on the microwave. It somehow is not fast enough now that we have become accustomed to an instant response world.

This information superhighway has many benefits, but it also can have many concerns. Not everyone that is “online” is there for your benefit. One only has to look at this current presidential election cycle to see the pitfalls and security concerns that not only can but may also arise from non-secure communication efforts.

Bradley County does not discuss International Protocol online but there are various, multiple, and important information that is transmitted daily that needs and requires reliable, safe, and SECURE communication capabilities. This process is accomplished by a network of professional individuals that seek to constantly improve service capabilities while keeping record safety and security in mind with all they do each day.

Across more than 70 departments and elected offices of Bradley County Government millions of combined emails, attachments, requests, phone calls, and even a few faxes still happen each month. There were also millions of attempts in the last calendar year to breach the security systems set in place to safeguard your personal information stored throughout each of these departments. All of which was stopped with no damage, or loss of data.

Our IT “Information Technology” department has a working relationship with the professionals within Bradley County government as well as coordinated relationships with many other professionals, who helped to build upon our system to provide greater ease of use while also trying to continue the security efforts that have been a priority for many years. It is always important to remember that a person, home, or network is only as secure as “its weakest link”.

This made me think of an article I recently read that gave many tips for individuals to help ensure they are not having to experience the data breach nightmare. Many ideas were mentioned but a few worth repeating include:

- 1) Don’t leave a password, or username, written down in front of clients or co-workers.
- 2) Use strong, complex passwords, and don’t share them with others.
- 3) Discard solicitation emails, even if forwarded by a trusted friend.
- 4) Do not download files or open attachments in emails from unknown senders.
- 5) Beware of any email, text, or phone call asking for personal information, including passwords.
- 6) Avoid clicking on links that people send. Use a search engine to find the proper legitimate link or type in the address manually.
- 7) Regularly review access controls.
- 8) Implement a mobile device management program.
- 9) Think about where sensitive information might be hiding.

The easiest, most important and usually the one that gets us all in trouble is: If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is exactly that, not true.

Internet crime is this century’s “Wild West” as it seems that anything goes. When the FBI, Military, International corporations, and astute businesses around the globe are struggling to remain secure from those who seek to gain information, trade secrets, or even worse, personal information to intimidate and track people and their families; it is a big deal and a growing concern.

No one entity is an island, nor can or will remain immune to threats that occur daily forever. But it is a comfort to know that with the information systems in place today throughout our County, we strive to not only be good stewards with all that is entrusted to us but to also work to improve all systems, for Bradley County to remain Tennessee at its best!

Our COVID-19 numbers continue to improve but we ALL must also continue our diligence in helping to prevent an uptick in cases. May we all continue to please remember to wash our hands or use sanitizer, keep the 6 ft. rule, avoid large gatherings, and wear a mask when around other people. Let's all do our part to also care about others, ourselves, and our families!